

What They're Saying:

"Let The House Vote On The Colombian Agreement"

"House Democrats' Postponement Of The U.S.-Colombian Free-Trade Agreement Was Prompted More By Politics Than Trade Policy"

The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement "Should Rightly Be Placed Above Partisan Considerations"

Speaker of the Colombian House of Representatives Oscar Arboleda Palacio: "The Democratic Party's decision to involve Colombia in an internal electoral process is unfair, as national policy should rightly be placed above partisan considerations." "The decision of the United States House of Representatives to stay approval of the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia is a blow to the Colombian economy, and affords colonial treatment to us that is unbefitting one of the United States' staunchest allies." (Oscar Arboleda Palacio, Letter To Speaker Pelosi, 4/15/08)

- "At this time Colombia needs your invaluable cooperation in the process of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States." "In order to reach those goals, generate legitimate employment, and strengthen our economy, Madam Speaker, we require the decisive support and cooperation of our largest trade partner."

"Pelosi Will Keep Making Demands, Get Them, Promise A Vote And Then Ask For More"

Los Angeles Times: "Halting the vote wasn't about the U.S. economy and it wasn't about Colombia. It was politics." "That's to be expected from Washington in an election year, but Pelosi's partisan considerations should not override her national duty. She should schedule a vote on the agreement, and Congress should approve it." (Editorial, "Pelosi Plays Politics," *Los Angeles Times*, 4/12/08)

Investor's Business Daily: "It sent shock waves across the globe Thursday that the Speaker of the House could kick the America's best Latin American ally in the face as Pelosi did, altering House rules to end a timeline for a treaty vote." "It's obvious this is a game of legislative rope-a-dope, and Pelosi will keep making demands, get them, promise a vote and then ask for more. The game is obvious to President Bush, who says it 'stiffs' our ally and he wants it to stop. But it ought to be obvious to Pelosi, too, and there are signs that perhaps she over-reached, politically speaking." (Editorial, "Stalling Free Trade Won't Work," *Investor's Business Daily*, 4/14/08)

The Chicago Tribune: "Colombia is a strategic U.S. ally and trading partner in a part of the world where the U.S. needs friends." "But Pelosi and the Democrats chose to ignore that and bow to organized labor in the U.S. Protectionist sentiment is controlling the Democratic Party these days, and that is a dangerous sign – particularly in a time of 'economic uncertainty.'" (Editorial, "Caving On Colombia," *The Chicago Tribune*, 4/12/08)

International Herald Tribune: "The trade pact would produce clear benefits for American businesses and their workers." "Walking away from the Colombia trade agreement or postponing it until conditions are perfect would send an unambiguous signal to our friends and opponents alike that the United States is an unreliable partner without a vision for cooperation in our hemisphere." (Editorial, "A Trade Pact Good For Colombia And For The U.S.," *International Herald Tribune*, 4/14/08)

The Financial Times: "[T]he failure to adopt this measure is economic and diplomatic nonsense." "The US is open to Colombian imports under the terms of agreements in place for more than 10 years. The deal would make those agreements permanent (currently they must be periodically renewed), but the shock to the US economy of increased imports from this small country, such as it was, is already accommodated." (Editorial, "A Setback On Trade In Washington," *Financial Times*, 4/14/08)

The Wall Street Journal's Mary Anastasia O'Grady: Speaker Pelosi "has stuck it to as U.S. ally in the war on terror to boot." "By bringing investment to the region, the FTA will improve employment prospects. The agreement is also expected to boost the overall wealth of the region, which means better social services and infrastructure. ... Does any of this matter to the cynical Speaker? Not a bit." (Mary Anastasia O'Grady, "Unions For Free Trade," *The Wall Street Journal*, 4/14/08)

Columnist Jack Kelly: "As a matter purely of economics, what Mrs. Pelosi has done is insane." "But the harm Mrs. Pelosi has done will go far beyond the jobs that will be lost at Caterpillar and other U.S. firms that would benefit from the Colombian free trade deal. Colombia is both our closest and most important ally in Latin America." (Jack Kelly, Op-Ed, "Killing Us With Their Songs," *The Washington Times*, 4/17/08)

"But For The Democrats Who've Blocked Action On The Deal, The Real Issues Don't Involve Colombia"

The Chattanooga [TN] Times Free Press: "If one of these nations deserves a good trade partnership with America, which would it be? Colombia, of course." "The South American nation of Colombia, by contrast, is a friend to America. It is a bulwark against the influence of leftist Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who menaces his neighbors and threatens the United States." (Editorial, "Backward Priorities," *The Chattanooga [TN] Times Free Press*, 4/16/08)

The Plain [OH] Dealer: "Even by current Democratic standards, the case against the Colombia pact is weak." "Set aside the needless insult to a South American ally that has struggled with civil unrest and violence. Instead, focus on the money: Because of existing agreements, Colombian products entering the United States are subject to few, if any, tariffs. By contrast, American goods headed south are hit with duties of up to 80 percent. Cementing that status quo would hurt American businesses and American workers." (Editorial, "Sidetracking Colombia Trade Deal Hurts U.S. Businesses And Workers," *The Plain [OH] Dealer*, 4/13/08)

Corpus Christi [TX] Caller Times: "If there is any procedural way to reverse it, Pelosi's high-handed manipulation to put the trade deal on the back-burner for a year should not be allowed to stand." "Some Democrats in Congress are looking for scapegoats for our economic woes and they have focused on free trade and globalization. This shift ignores the historic evidence: The key to American prosperity since World War II has been the free exchange of goods and services. Turning inward by erecting barriers to free trade or refusing to tear down existing barriers would have disastrous consequences in the long term." (Editorial, "Congress Should Pass Colombia Trade Deal," *Corpus Christi [TX] Caller Times*, 4/14/08)

Tacoma [WA] News Tribune: "[A]s Pelosi and many other Democrats know full well, economic growth and free trade are not mutually exclusive. One of the surest ways to achieve the former is to expand the latter." "That's especially true with the Colombian deal. Its chief effect would be to lower Colombian tariffs on American exports, including Washington crops, electronics and machinery." (Editorial, "Free Trade Shouldn't Be Sacrificed To Politics," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 4/14/08)

The Columbus [OH] Dispatch: "House Democrats' postponement of the U.S.-Colombian free-trade agreement was prompted more by politics than trade policy." "Many Democrats knew this deal is favorable to the United States, but they feared breaking with organized labor during an election year." (Editorial, "Bad Idea," *The Columbus [OH] Dispatch*, 4/15/08)

The Charlotte [NC] Observer: "The Democrats' action is dumb and deceitful – which is to say, it's politics." "But for the Democrats who've blocked action on the deal, the real issues don't involve Colombia. They involve the 2008 elections. ... Jobs lost to international competition are easier to see than jobs created by global trade." (Editorial, "Trade vs. Politics," *The Charlotte [NC] Observer*, 4/15/08)

The Austin [TX] American-Statesman: "Pelosi and other House Democrats who enacted a change in a procedural rule to effectively block a vote on the agreement really aren't focused on the fairness of the proposed agreement with Colombia." "Let the House vote on the Colombian agreement. If House Democrats really believe it's a bad bill, they can vote against it. We suspect, though, they know it's a good deal for both the United States and Colombia." (Editorial, "House Should Vote On Colombia Trade Deal," *The Austin [TX] American-Statesman*, 4/14/08)

The [CA] Daily Breeze: "By shielding members of her party from recording a vote, Pelosi sold out American consumers, farmers and businesses to unions and political expediency." "This development, sadly, is a manifestation of a year of anti-trade demagoguery coming from the Democratic Party on the campaign trail." (Editorial, "Trade Pact Victim Of Politics," *The [CA] Daily Breeze*, 4/14/08)

The News [DE] Journal: "House Speaker Nancy Pelosi effectively killed the proposal with a deft parliamentary maneuver that was designed to secure votes from trade protectionists and the executive staff of the AFL-CIO." "This anti-free trade move is bound to have repercussions and American workers will be affected. Colombians now will be purchasing products like tractors and mining equipment from countries other than the United States." (Editorial, "Derailing Colombian Trade Pact Was Political Pandering At Its Worst," *The News [DE] Journal*, 4/12/08)